

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-2, 4, 8-10, 12, 16-17 and 19 are currently pending in the application. Claims 2-3, 9-11, 17 and 19 are amended by the present amendment. Support for the amended claims can be found in the original specification, claims and drawings.<sup>1</sup> No new matter is presented.

This amendment is submitted in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 which after final rejection permits entering amendments, canceling claims, complying with any requirement of form expressly set forth in a previous Office Action, or presenting rejected claims in better form for consideration on appeal. As the present amendment merely amends the claims to comply with a requirement of form expressly set forth in the outstanding Office Action, and places the claims in better form for consideration on appeal, it is respectfully requested that the present amendment be entered under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

In the Office Action, the specification is objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(d)(1); Claims 9-10, 12, 16-17 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101; and Claims 1-2, 4, 8-10, 12, 16-17 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Ohsaki et al. (U.S. Pat. 6,985,938, herein Ohsaki).

The Office Action objects to the specification under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(d)(1), and rejects Claims 9-10, 12, 16-17 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

The objection to the specification under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(d)(1), and the rejection of Claims 9-10, 12, 16 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 is based on the assertion in the Office Action that “the original disclosure does not explicitly disclose ‘a memory.’” In response, the

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<sup>1</sup> e.g., original Claim 1, and Fig. 2 and p. 12, l. 17 – p. 13, l. 19.

claims are amended to recite “a storing means,” which, as discussed above, is supported by the originally filed disclosure.

As a basis for the rejection of Claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 101, the Office Action asserts that the claimed “computer-readable medium” is not proper since the claim may be “drawn to a form of energy.” In response, the specification is amended to remove the phrase “can be distributed via a network,” and therefore the claims may not be reasonably construed as reading on “a form of energy” as asserted in the outstanding Office Action.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the specification under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(d)(1), and the rejection of Claims 9-10, 12, 16-17 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 101, be withdrawn.

Claims 1-2, 4, 8-10, 12, 16-17 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Ohsaki. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, as independent Claims 1, 9, 17 and 19 recite novel features clearly not taught or rendered obvious by the applied references.

Independent Claim 1, for example, recites, in part, a system management method for associating at least a process object and at least a process that should be executed for each process object with each node in a tree structure, and operating each node based on the tree structure so as to manage the process object and the process, comprising:

...a process execution step of, when execution of the process corresponding to the function node is requested by the registered user, causing the function node to execute the process only when the process is permitted by the registered user operation authority, of the registered user requesting the process, ***set in the general node that is a parent node of the function node*** when execution of the process corresponding to the function node is requested by any function nodes, causing the function node to execute the process only when the process is permitted by the function node operation authority, of the function node that requests the process, ***set for the general node that is the parent node of the function node***.

Independent Claims 9, 17 and 19, while directed to alternative embodiments, recite similar features. Accordingly, the remarks and arguments presented below are applicable to each of independent Claims 1, 9, 17 and 19.

Turning to the applied reference, Ohsaki describes a workflow system for a paperless office that includes a manipulating computer terminal for executing a workflow between persons in charge, a computer terminal for designing the workflow by designating project variables for multiplexing a plurality of paths for nodes, each indicating a unit of operation to be handled, and a workflow server for managing the designed workflow and accessing the manipulating computer terminals in accordance with activities that indicate operations assigned to the nodes.<sup>2</sup>

Ohsaki, however, fails to disclose “a process execution step of... causing the function node to execute the process only when the process is permitted by the registered user operation authority, of the registered user requesting the process, *set in the general node that is a parent node of the function node* ... causing the function node to execute the process only when the process is permitted by the function node operation authority, of the function node that requests the process, *set for the general node that is the parent node of the function node*,” as recited in independent Claim 1.

In rejecting the above noted features, the Office Action relies on Fig. 9A and col. 7, ll. 13-26 and col. 11, ll. 51-64 of Ohsaki which describes that to operate the slip, the node generates as many child processes as array elements and executes the child processes in parallel, because the node is set so as to refer to the project type array. At this time, the different project IDs (soumu\_prj, keiri\_prj and eigyou\_prj) are evaluated, and different types of child processes are set. Routes defined by the separate projects are used, and data is transmitted to the departments by using the separate routes to be approved by the respective

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<sup>2</sup> Ohsaki, Abstract.

persons in charge in the departments. The child processes go to a next node in synchronization with one another.

Thus, this cited portion of Ohsaki merely describes that various project IDs are evaluated to determine what type of child processes should be set, but has nothing to do with “causing the function node [child node] to execute the process **only when the process is permitted by the registered user operation authority ... set in the general node that is a parent node of the function node.**” Instead, this cited portion of Ohsaki describes that project IDs are evaluated to determine which child processes (routing operations) should be performed, but does not check a registered user operation in a parent node in order to determine if a process is can be executed in the child node.

In reference to Fig. 9A and col. 11, ll. 51-64, Ohsaki further describes that when a client request management program 33 receives a request to set the value, an evaluation logic is called using a current process as a "parent process" (step S101). Then, the first data name portion of the data name to be substituted is set for "Evaluation data name" (step S102). Then, an array subscript portion of the first data name of the data name to be substituted is set for "INDEX" (step S103). Then, a portion of the substitution data name excluding Evaluation data name and INDEX is set for "Remaining phrase" (step S104).

Therefore, Ohsaki again merely describes substituting various data names of the child objects to ensure that they are routed properly, but fails to disclose “causing the function node to execute the process **only when the process is permitted by the registered user operation authority, of the registered user requesting the process, set in the general node that is a parent node of the function node ...,”** as recited in independent Claim 1.

Thus, Ohsaki fails to disclose “a process execution step of... causing the function node to execute the process only when the process is permitted by the registered user operation authority, of the registered user requesting the process, **set in the general node that is a**

*parent node of the function node* ... causing the function node to execute the process only when the process is permitted by the function node operation authority, of the function node that requests the process, *set for the general node that is the parent node of the function node*,” as recited in independent Claim 1.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons discussed above, Applicants respectfully that the rejection of Claim 1 (and the claims which depend therefrom) under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn. For substantially similar reasons, it is also submitted that independent Claim 9 (and the claims which depend therefrom) and Claims 17 and 19 patentably define over Ohsaki.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the foregoing comments, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by Claims 1-2, 4, 8-10, 12, 16-17 and 19 is patentably distinguishing over the applied references. The present application is therefore believed to be in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of the application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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